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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effects of social competence, group formation, and group behavior on the marginalization of students in a 7th-grade physical education setting. Marginalized students are defined as those in the class, but not "of" the class. In addition, factors such as individual and team activity and teacher expectations help to explore the complexity of the process from a social standpoint. Data, collected through field observations and individual oral interviews with teachers and students, identified five students as marginalized due to a lack of social or physical competence. The formation of groups and the power which groups exerted was found to have a great influence on interactions between students and marginalization. Group membership was protected through various tactics, including harassment of unwanted individuals attempting to enter a group, or separation from others by choice. Several factors common to all marginalized students were identified including exclusionary episodes, reactions to exclusion, teacher interventions, and survival strategies. Implications of the study include the need for changes in curriculum and teaching methodology in order to alleviate the marginality status of students. Several figures depicting reactions to group behavior are provided. (Contains approximately 30 references.) (LL)

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Becoming Marginalized in a Middle School Physical Education Class

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Abstract

This research was an exploratory qualitative study about becoming marginalized in a middle school physical education class. Marginalized students were defined as those students who were in the class, but not "of" the class; those individuals who lived on the borders of the class. In order to describe the process, the following were considered: (a) interactions among students, (b) interactions between students and teachers, (c) activity, team and individual, (d) competence, real and perceived, and (e) teacher and student characteristics.

Several areas within the research literature were examined. Initially, these areas included Bandura's Social Learning Process (Bandura, 1986), which focused on the pattern of behavior one learns in order to cope with their environment. The patterns were affected by such things as self-concept, self-efficacy, attribution and competence. Marginality was described from a social standpoint, with marginality based on a lack of social skill, social status or the inability to successfully interact with peers (Buono & Kamm, 1983). Because the study took place in the context of education, the behaviors of those involved in the setting, students and teachers alike, were also examined. These behaviors included interactions among students (Cartwright & Zander, 1968; Griffin, 1984, 1985), interactions between students and teachers, as well as teacher expectations, and their effect (Martinek, 1981, 1983, 1989, 1991) on the behaviors of teachers and students within the physical education setting.

As the study progressed, it became evident that groups, and how they are formed, had an impact on marginalization. A group was defined as a set of individuals whose relationship made them interdependent upon each other. Within groups, role expectations, power and subordinate positions and acceptance were examined (Cartwright & Zander, 1968). Therefore, groups membership and the role expectations on those within groups was also examined (Bales, 1950; Freedman, Leary, Ossorio, & Coffey, 1951; Merton, 1957; & Tuckman, 1965).

Marginalization was studied through a 7th grade physical education class in a small middle school in the Pacific Northwest. Data were collected through twelve weeks of field observations, and individual oral interviews with teachers and students.

Five students were identified as marginalized within the physical education class. The three boys, Glen, Robin and Bud, as well as one of the girls, Libby, had groups in which they were accepted members. However, at various times, due to a lack of social or physical competence, each of these individuals were marginalized by their own group or others outside of their accepted group. One female, Brenda, was socially isolated by all but a few members of the class, and had no group in which she resided.

The formation of and power which groups exert were found to have a great influence on interactions between students and marginalization. Group membership was protected through various tactics, including harassment of unwanted individuals attempting to enter a group, or separation from others by choice.

The study identified several factors common to all students identified as marginalized, including exclusionary episodes, reactions to exclusion, teacher interventions and survival strategies. Implications raised in the study, included the need for changes in curriculum and teaching methodology in order to alleviate the marginality status of students.

Introduction

Adolescence is a time of conflict and crisis, a time when adolescents strive to establish their own identities, yet want to be accepted by peers, to become part of a group. Research has described the period of adolescence as one of conflict between identity and role confusion, and intimacy and isolation (Erickson, 1963). These feelings of confusion, isolation and loneliness are also characteristics of students with marginal status. Marginalized individuals fail to meet the informal demands, both physical and social, and expectations of the group they are a part of, and thus reside on the borders of that group (Buono & Kamm, 1983). Students who are marginalized because they fail to meet the teacher or student expectations established in the class may find themselves not only on the borders of the class, but in a state of isolation and loneliness.

Marginality has been described from a social standpoint, with marginality based on a lack of social skills, social status or the inability to successfully interact with peers (Buono & Kamm, 1983). Adolescent students, socially marginalized, experience an adjusting self-concept that is often influenced negatively by the interactions of other students and teachers. Studying the interactions and characteristics of marginalized students within the gymnasium will offer a greater understanding of how social competence influences marginalization.

East and Rook (1992) characterize social isolation as exclusion of some students from the normal patterns of peer interaction. Grant and Fine (1992) suggest that this social isolation is a dynamic process which involves the lack of adequate verbal and self-presentation skill. This exclusion, or withdrawal, from peer interactions and friendships can hinder the development of the skill needed to succeed socially (Eder, 1991).

Whether a child is isolated by peers or withdraws intentionally, research has shown that these students are less successful in achieving social goals. This failure can lead to difficulties dealing with peer interactions and can also lead to the development of negative self-perceptions and low self-esteem (Hymel, Rubin, Rowden & LeMare, 1990; Rubin & Mills, 1988). It is possible then, that a student who has been rejected by peers may eventually come to realize that they are disliked, have poor peer status, or are unable to find acceptance within a desire d peer group.

The marginalized student is one who has received little research attention in the physical education setting. Studies in the physical education setting have investigated aspects of self-concept and their effect on the behavior of students (Bandura, 1977; Gorrell, 1990; Harter, 1982; Martinek, 1991). This line of research found that social, emotional and physical self-concept of students had an impact on their willingness to participate in class (Bressan & Weiss, 1982; Martinek, 1991). Low self-concept in any of these domains, either social, emotional or physical, affected the student's desire to be involved or to persist on task (Martinek, 1991). Similarly, Page, Frey, Talbert and Falk (1992) found that children lacking social or physical skills found interaction and involvement within a group setting difficult.

Research on group formation and development may be important in understanding the process by which students become marginalized. Cartwright and Zander (1968) define a group as a set of individuals whose association is based upon interdependence with one another. Homans (1950) defined a group strictly by the interactions between its' members. Merton (1957) offered a sociological concept of a group which included the following criteria: (a) frequency of interaction between individuals, (b) interacting persons define

themselves as "members" of the group, and (c) persons in the interactions are defined by others as "belonging" to the group.

Three different circumstances bring groups together (Cartwright & Zander, 1968). These include: (a) individuals brought together to accomplish some objective, such as a team; (b) groups formed spontaneously in order to participate together, such as a pick-up game of basketball, or (c) individuals who come together because they are treated in a similar way by other members of society, such as a minority, or marginalized individuals. Tuckman (1965) outlined four developmental stages that interacting groups face. These stages include forming, storming, norming and performing. As individuals come together, forming a group, members must define their situation with respect to who they are, what their task is, and how best to proceed. This is the forming stage. Once the group has been formed, storming begins. During this storming stage subgroups form within the group producing conflict and disagreement as the groups decides how their task is to be achieved. It is during this stage that conflict also arises over member relationships, including group leadership and authority. This may be a critical stage in marginalization.

As the conflicts are settled, the group begins to develop norms or rules which govern their relationships and their approaches to solving the task at hand. It is during this norming stage that group cohesiveness emerges. At this point the group begins to function together, or to perform. During the performing stage, the final stage in group formation, stronger internal bonds of membership are produced.

A related issue to group research examines the effect of individual group members upon each other. Bales (1950) examined the patterns of group interaction and described these

patterns as either proactive or reactive. Both of these terms refer to the frequency with which an interaction tends to be followed by another identifiable type of interaction. These proactive and reactive patterns help the group to maintain and retain a state of equilibrium, or cohesiveness. Freedman, Leary, Ossorio, and Coffey (1951) termed these proactive and reactive patterns interpersonal reflexes. Their perspective demonstrated how group structure is maintained through the observable exchanges between interacting group members. Freedman, et al (1951) suggest that the behavior of one member of a group calls forth a response from another member of the group, and behavior patterns are formed. These behaviors were arranged on a circle which reflected two major axes: dominance-submission and love-hate. Other categories on the circle reflect variations on and combinations of these two basic interpersonal qualities. During observations of group behaviors, this scheme can be used to identify what one group member's behavior is doing to others within the group. For the purpose of this study, research by Freedman (1951), may assist in the identification of behaviors occurring in relation to marginalized students, both outside and within established group structures. Results of a study by Shannon and Guerney (1973) support previous research on interpersonal reflexes. Their data indicates that there is a strong connection between the nature of one group member's behavior and the kind of response it evokes from other members of the group.

The majority of studies conducted relating to group formation and group membership behavior have focused on groups which form for a specific purpose. These groups have included therapy groups, committees, and problem solving groups. Few studies have dealt with group formation in the education context, and none of these studies have focused on

marginalized students and the effect of group formation and group behavior on these marginalized students.

The purpose of this study was to describe the process by which students become marginalized in a middle school physical education class. In order to describe the marginalization of students in a middle school physical education class, the following aspects were considered: (a) interactions among students, (b) interactions between students and teachers, (c) activity, team or individual, (d) competence, real and perceived, (e) teacher characteristics, and (f) student characteristics.

The direction of this study would provide researchers and teachers with a description of the effects of social competence, group formation and group behavior on the marginalization of students in the physical education setting. In addition, factors such as individual and team activity, teacher expectations and student's competence will help to explore the complexity of the process from a social standpoint.

Criteria for identifying marginalized students were gathered from research conducted by Griffin (1984, 1985) in which participation styles of male and female students in a middle school physical education class were described. Marginal students were identified based upon results of a pilot study, conducted the semester prior to the current study. Though initial identification of groups and subjects were based on Griffin's (1984, 1985) descriptions of behavior and participation styles, it became apparent that this criteria was extremely limiting. Consequently, social interaction styles, such as social isolation, inadequate verbal and self-presentation skills, identified by Hendricks (1982) and East and Rook (1992) were used in addition to participation styles. Behaviors observed included interactions with teachers and

other students.

The study was first approved through the University Human Subject Review Board. Access into the school was approved by the central office of the school district and the principal of the middle school. Both teachers agreed to be a part of the study and signed consent forms. Consent forms were also mailed to the parents of each of the students involved in the study and were returned, with approval, before the study began. Pseudonyms were provided to protect the confidentiality of the setting and individuals involved in the study. Pseudonyms were given to the school, the teachers and the students.

Data Collection

Data were collected through the use of field observations and interviews with teachers and students. Observations took place each time the class met throughout the semester, a total of 60 days. Classes lasted 30 to 40 minutes and observations commenced with entry of the students into the gym and ended with the dismissal bell at the end of the school day. Student assembly for roll call, warm-up exercises, the main lesson for each class period, and student dismissal were activities observed daily. The researcher also remained present until dismissal time in order to observe the students in the informal setting of waiting for the dismissal bell. Field notes were kept during each observation and used later in the analysis.

Individual interviews took place with various students in the class including those considered to be class leaders, those identified as marginalized, and those who could be described somewhere in between. Each student was interviewed twice. This interview

methodology was used in order to compare the answers given by students from all groups in the class. Interview questions dealt specifically with social and physical competence, as well as feelings of general self-worth of the students. These were questions which dealt with physical and social interactions and the students feelings about these interactions. Questions asked of students were designed to elicit information related to self-concept, self-efficacy, competence and social interactions with peers and teachers, and to confirm some of the relationships, behaviors and interactions perceived by the researcher. The first interview with students took place eight weeks into the semester, during the second individual sports unit on badminton. Interview questions dealt with team and individual sports, picking teams, reasons individuals are left out of interactions, and feelings about future sport units in the class.

The second interview with students took place during the physical fitness testing unit. The interview also included questions about co-educational participation, groups, and specific questions related to the treatment of other students in the class were asked of certain individuals, in order to validate observations made by the researcher.

Three interviews were also conducted with each of the teachers. Teachers were interviewed separately. The first interview, conducted informally, took place within the first two weeks of the study. As groups began to form in the class, teachers were asked about each of the groups and their interactions. These first informal interviews were designed to aid in the identification of marginalized students, to verify those marginalized students identified by the researcher during observations, and to discuss the expectations which teachers held for specific students in the class.

Each teacher was interviewed twice more. The first formal interview was conducted

eight weeks into the study. Questions were again designed to reconfirm the identities of marginalized students and verify some of the strategies these students used in group interaction. Teachers were also asked about how social and physical competence effected a student's ability to succeed in the class.

A second interview was held at the conclusion of the study. At that time, teachers were asked about feelings toward marginalized students, what they perceived the causes of marginalization to be, and strategies they use in dealing with marginalized students. Several procedures were used to ensure trustworthiness within the study. Throughout each of the interviews with the teachers and students, questions were also included to examine relationships and behaviors as perceived by the investigator in an effort to check for researcher bias. Teachers were also given the opportunity to read and discuss the results of the study at its conclusion. With the exception of a few changes made in biographical information, no other changes were made in the results.

Preliminary and continual analysis of the data took place in the field in order to give the data collection direction. Continuing analysis of field data was conducted in order to identify emerging patterns within the data. All coding categories were conducted by the researcher. Interview data obtained from teacher and student interviews were triangulated, through coding of data, with field notes, observations, the methodological log, and informal conversations with teachers and students.

In looking at interactions, between and among students, and between students and teachers, the data were initially coded into the following categories: (a) setting codes, including descriptions of the gym and the locker rooms (b) situation codes, dealing with

situations that occurred frequently in the setting, (c) coding of specific subjects, including those individuals identified as marginalized, and those who took part in the process, (d) process coding, such as changes in the socialization process throughout the semester in individuals and within groups, (e) codes specific to teacher behaviors within the context of the gym. What emerged from this coding procedure were patterns of social interaction that took place, driving the process of marginalization. These will be highlighted in this presentation.

Marginalization of students in this middle school physical education class began the first day the class met for the new semester. As the semester progressed, certain behaviors, interactions, and activities effected the marginalization process. These included group formation, exclusionary tactics used by groups, marginalized students reactions to these exclusionary tactics, and the teachers' involvement with each of the marginalized students. Each of these factors will be used to describe the marginalization of certain students in the class.

Context

John F. Kennedy (J.F.K.) Middle School is located in a Pacific Northwest community. It is the only middle school in a town with three elementary schools and one high school. The school houses approximately 500, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students. Middleburg is a farming community and is also the site of one of the state's major universities. The population of Middleburg's 23,000 inhabitants is very diverse, including faculty, students,

many international students, and visiting faculty from around the world. In addition 45% of the population resides in the community throughout the school year, and then departs at the finish of the spring semester.

The class observed in this study was a 7th grade physical education class. At J.F.K. Middle School, 7th graders are only required to take one semester of physical education. This particular class was selected because they were entering into their single semester of physical education. While many of these students shared academic classes together, these students had not participated in this physical education class previously. This was significant in that it gave the researcher the opportunity to observe the socialization process as it unfolded.

John F. Kennedy Middle School offers a very safe environment for its students. The teachers are caring, and expectations for all students are set very high. Advanced classes are offered in all academic areas, as well as in the area of fine arts. The school also offers a variety of sports for both boys and girls. There is "no cut" policy, which gives all students, regardless of their athletic ability, the opportunity to participate in athletics without the fear of being cut from the team.

This class, as all physical education classes at J.F.K., was coeducational. Students were assigned to the class on the basis of their schedule, and the option of taking only one semester of physical education. Assignment into the class was in no way based on skill level or ability.

Two physical education specialists, one female, one male instructed the class. While the class was team taught, Ms. Davis, 30 years old, a 6 year veteran teacher and coach, was

responsible for the girls in the class, while Mr. Nolan, 42 years old, was in his first year at the middle school. He had recently returned to teaching after more than ten years out of the educational field. Mr. Nolan was responsible for the boys in the class. He also served as a coach at the local high school. The responsibilities of each of these teachers included keeping roll and grades for their respective students, and team teaching all units during the semester.

The semester was divided into sport units. The following is a breakdown of the semester's schedule of units in the order they were taught: Basketball (3 weeks), pickleball (3 weeks), badminton (3 weeks), bowling (3 weeks), and soccer (1 week). Physical fitness testing and softball were also taught, but these units occurred following the conclusion of the study.

The gymnasium at J.F.K., is very large, approximately 90' x 90'. A rolled curtain hangs from the ceiling, to be used to divide the gym into 2 smaller gyms; however, this curtain is never used and students participated together in all activities. Students enter the gym from side doors and head into separate locker rooms attached to each teacher's office at one end of the gym. After dressing, students assemble in the gym and line up in squads, girls on one side, boys on the other. Each squad consists of seven or eight students. The 18 girls in class were dispersed into 3 squads, while the 23 boys, were dispersed across four squads.

Five students were eventually identified as marginalized. These students included three males, Robin, Bud and Glen, and two females, Libby and Brenda.

Results

Group Formation

Groups began their formation the very first day of class. Research indicates that groups

form for a variety of reasons. Groups have been conceived as a set of individuals whose relationship makes them dependent upon one another (Cartwright & Zander, 1968). Groups also form because individual members share a common interest (Smith & Berg, 1987). Groups within this class formed for each of these reasons.

Four initial groups were identified within the first two weeks of class. The first of these groups, "the Power" was the dominant group in the class. This group was made up of five boys, all highly competent physically. Robin was a member of this group, and Bud, an aspiring member. Two other groups which formed during these first two weeks were "the Boys" a nondescript group made up of the majority of the remaining boys in the class, and "the Girls", the largest group in the class, made up of all but two girls in the class. This group often splintered into several smaller groups, depending on the activity taking place on any given day. The final, distinct group in the class was "the Others". This group was defined by one teacher as "those students who have taken themselves out" of the class. Though these individuals formed their own group and rarely participated with the rest of the class, members of this group were not considered marginalized because they did have their own group within the class. This group consisted of seven individuals, all male, with the exception of Libby. Libby and Glen belonged to this group.

For "the Power" the common interest in forming a group was their high level of physical competence. For other groups, such as "the Others" the relationship formed because members relied on each other for support and protection. Throughout the semester, groups remained constant with little change in membership.

Exclusionary Tactics

Groups employed a number of tactics to maintain membership and exclude or ignore certain students (Figure 1). As groups began to form in the class, exclusionary tactics were used to protect group membership and maintain group boundaries. For most groups, these tactics were subtle, and included behaviors such as ignoring, walking or turning away from individuals who were not welcome into the group. For one group, five boys nicknamed "the Power", exclusionary behaviors were overt and openly displayed. "The Power" used both physical and verbal intimidation in order to maintain and protect group boundaries.

"The Power" began to utilize these exclusionary tactics beginning the first day of class. While membership in most groups in the class was reliant on popularity within the membership, "the Power" employed a different standard. Identified by the teachers, as well as through observational data, the members of "the Power" were the best athletes in the class and based participation with and in their group on physical prowess. From the beginning, they challenged the inclusion of anyone into their group whom they did not perceive to be skilled enough to participate with them. "The Power" used ridicule and name-calling to dissuade would-be players. When this tactic failed, members of the groups used a variety of physical actions to make their point clear. These physical behaviors included such things as pushing or tripping, or extremely rough play during game situations. If these tactics failed, both verbal and physical intimidation increased. Robin's position in the group was to intimidate outsiders into withdrawing from the game. While players joining in from outside "the Power" occasionally stayed for the remainder of the game in progress, willing to put up with the ridicule, few returned when the class was given the option of participating with teams of their own choosing. Bud's initial participation within "the Power" resulted from his

willingness to accept this negative behavior from members of "the Power".

For the most part, each of these exclusionary tactics used by groups were successful in discouraging unwanted persons from attempting to join a group where they were not welcome. "The Power" and "the Girls" used these tactics most often. These exclusionary tactics were primarily employed to exclude only a few members of the class, those deemed physically inept, or socially unpopular. "The Others" employed many of the same tactics to exclude individuals from their group also.

Reactions to exclusion

Excluded students, those marginalized, employed a variety of behaviors to deal with exclusion. These individual reactions, as well as exclusionary tactics employed by groups, are depicted in Figures 2-7. The method of dealing with exclusion was to return or to move into a group where they were accepted by their peers, or to form a group of their own. Some students, Bud, Glen, and Libby, approached the teachers in an effort to find support and intervention with a group they wanted to join. This was not often a successful tactic. Oftentimes this intervention included an angry rebuke from the teacher to the student asking for intervention.

On an individual basis, students dealt with exclusion in several different ways. For example, ignoring the behavior of others, internalizing and accepting the fact that they were not popular with everyone in the class, or isolating themselves in an effort to avoid the negative behaviors of others towards them were typical ways students dealt with exclusion.

Libby, a petite blond, safe in one group, but not included by any others, accepted the fact that she was not popular in the class (Figure 2).

> "I've been left out. Um, when I was, when I was in, um, when I was littler, I would sit up on the stage (in the gym) during PE cause I knew no one would want to be with me.

Brenda, one of five students in the class identified as marginalized, chose to remain separate from the other members of the class after several unsuccessful attempts to be included in several different groups (Figure 3). She seemed oblivious to her low social status within the class, and during interviews suggested she had friends in the class, though this was not evident to the researcher. In numerous incidents she aligned herself with the teachers in the class, or with other adults who were present on various occasions. She seemed to do this in order to alleviate loneliness or for her own protection.

Bud chose a different method of dealing with the exclusionary tactics of others toward him (Figure 4). Within the first two weeks of the start of the semester, Bud decided he wanted to be a member of "the Power". He felt he was physically competent enough to be included in this group and expressed a desire to participate with "the Power". This was not a decision welcomed by the boys who made up the membership of "the Power" because he was not considered an equal, either physically or socially. Bud was subjected to every exclusionary behavior discussed previously. As their tactics escalated from verbal to physical abuse, Bud maintained his position, rarely fighting back. At one point, early in the semester, he approached Mr. Nolan in an effort to find support. However, he became the target of Mr. Nolan's disdain on this occasion and thereafter, dealt with the others' behaviors toward him on his own. Most of the time, Bud simply ignored the attacks directed at him. On occasion he walked away, or put up his hands to ward off blows coming his way.

On one occasion, near the end of the semester, he took a more active role in his own

defense. Jordan, a member of "the Power", had been bad-mouthing and pushing Bud physically all through a basketball game. During the game, Jordan took offense to a foul he though Bud had committed toward a member of his team. He punched Bud several times, and Bud ignored Jordan's behavior throughout the class period. As the bell rang, both boys went into the locker room to prepare to go home. Suddenly, Bud came out of the locker room, dragging Jordan behind him. Jordan, was hopping along on one foot, trying to keep his balance. Bud dragged Jordan over to where Mr. Nolan was standing, dropped Jordan's foot to the floor, turned around and went back into the locker room. When asked later about this incident, Bud said "I just did what I had to do."

Bud seemed to be willing to accept whatever treatment he received in order to maintain his position in "the Power". Whether Bud's self-concept was strong enough to deal with the abuse or whether he wanted to participate with these boys because they were better athletes, the motivation was unclear. While Bud remained socially marginalized by this group, his confidence in himself and his ability to participate at the level expected by "the Power" permitted him to ease his own marginal status.

Glen, was an accepted member of "the Others". His marginal status became evident when he was outside of this group. These instances generally occurred when he was assigned by the teachers to participate with individuals not in "the Others". He had particular trouble when forced to interact with "the Power". He used a variety of tactics to protect himself when he had to participate with this group (Figure 5). These tactics included joking with members of "the Power", ignoring their behavior towards him, or fighting back verbally. None of these tactics proved successful for Glen, and he never successfully interacted with

"the Power". He avoided contact with this group whenever possible.

The final student identified as marginalized was Robin. Robin was an accepted member of "the Power". His marginal status stemmed from his overaggressive behavior and bad attitude. He was shunned by many in the class because he was often verbally abuse when he did not get his own way. When his overaggressive behavior was directed toward members of "the Power", he was also shunned by them. He was the individual within the group who protected the boundaries of the group. Though he was not the emotional leader of "the Power", he was the physical leader of this group. His physicality was a trait that kept him in a commanding position within "the Power". When faced with having to play basketball with several members of "the Others", Glen and Ben, who did not normally play with Robin, Robin became verbally abuse toward these two boys, demeaning their ability. Robin appealed to the teacher to have the boys taken out of the game, but the teacher refused to remove Ben and Glen. Robin returned to the game, but his frustration continued to mount and the game eventually ended in a pushing match. However this physicality toward individuals outside of "the Power" kept him marginalized by the majority of the class. On several occasions, this physicality also caused Robin to become marginalized by "the Power". Occasionally Robin became frustrated at losing within his own group, becoming verbally and physically abusive with other members of "the Power". The group would often begin moving off toward another location in the gym, leaving Robin on his own, to find another game. In an effort to relieve this marginal status, Robin changed his behavior toward members of "the Power" and was allowed to return to the group (Figure 6).

Teacher Involvement

Throughout the semester, the teachers had an effect on the marginalization of students in the class. Most of this effect resulted when the teachers ignored the exclusionary behaviors of students in the class. In a few instances, teacher behaviors in the gym had an overt effect on the marginalization of students. Mr. Nolan, the male teacher in the class, abetted the process through his treatment of those students he himself said "had taken themselves out" of the class. For example, on the few occasions in which teams were assigned, Mr. Nolan's actions toward the marginalized students served to keep them separate. He often paired the marginalized students together or failed to separate them.

While the overt actions happened only on occasion, more subtle behaviors on the part of the teachers enhanced the marginalization of certain students in the class. While both teachers expressed the knowledge that marginalized students existed within the class, one teacher, Ms. Davis, blamed the marginalized students themselves for their status in the class, and Mr. Nolan, while expressing sympathy for the marginalized students, continued to exhibit behaviors toward these students, which allowed them to remain excluded.

For the most part, teaching methodology, and not teacher behaviors, enhanced marginalization of students in the class. From the first day of the semester, groups were allowed to exist and exert their own power in excluding marginalized students. During the team sports units, these already established groups became teams, thus getting the opportunity, not only to strengthen in power, but to use this power to further exclude others in a legitimate way. The order in which sports were taught also enhanced the marginalization of students. The semester began with basketball, a team sport. It was at this time that

groups began to form in the class. By the time the class began the individual sport units of pickleball and badminton, four weeks later, these groups were solidly established. Many of the students in the class interacted only with those individuals who were members of their own established groups. This allowed for little interaction with other students in the class. As the class began to move into the individual sport units, students struggled to successfully interact with those outside of their own groups. Up to this point in time, they had not been required to participate with individuals not of their own choosing. As the units progressed, and students became more familiar with each other, these interactions became less strained and more successful. Perhaps individual sports units should have been taught first in an effort to allow students to interact with each other before each of the groups was established and began to exert so much power.

Discussion

Through observations and interviews a number of behaviors and interactions affecting marginalization could be discerned. The following section outlines the relationships between variables observed throughout the study, such as student interactions, and student and teacher interactions, as well as, social interaction styles involving group formation, exclusionary tactics and marginalized students' reactions to these tactics.

Interactions between students were affected by several factors. Among these factors were the formation of groups and the power they exerted over other groups and individuals in the class. All of the groups identified in the study, "the Power", "the Others", "the Boys" and "the Girls" experienced the stages of development discussed by Tuckman (1965), though only "the Power" and "the Others" were observed experiencing all four stages. Within "the

Power", the storming stage was the most obvious during observations. Robin and Bud each caused conflict within the group. Bud, because he was an unwanted member, and Robin, because his behavior was often counter to what was expected by the group. In "the Others", Libby faced much the same situation that Bud experienced in "the Power", that of an unwanted member, and she was shunned by the group. Glen's marginal status was not affected by the stages of development that each group went through. Glen was not affected because he was an accepted member of a group and followed along with the process of group formation. Brenda was unable to achieve the norms established by "the Others" and was excluded by the group very early in the semester, following this exclusion she was never an accepted member of any group.

Groups used a variety of tactics to protect their membership. One of the groups in the class used physical and verbal abuse to protect their boundaries. Another group kept themselves separate from others in the class in order to protect themselves from the abuse. Thus, marginality was supported by the strength of the groups and their ability to use their power to exclude others (Cartwright & Zander, 1968).

It became evident that marginalized students had an individual effect on the behaviors of others within groups. These findings relate to research conducted by Freedman, et al (1951) in which members of groups are linked by observable bonds of interaction. The presence of each of the students identified as marginalized effected the group process in some way. Bud's presence in "the Power" elicited negative behaviors from Robin and other members of "the Power". Libby and Glen had the same effect on "the Power". Bud, however, chose to stay in the group, while Libby and Glen returned to "the Others". Initially Brenda's presence

in any of the groups brought some kind of response. However, as the semester continued, this effect became minimal and she seemed to become a nonexistent member of the class.

Interactions between teachers and students supported marginality in overt and subtle ways. The overt interactions, such as public humiliation of students, exclusionary teaching methodologies marginalized students from others in the class. The more subtle interactions, such as complacency of teachers about marginal status and blaming the marginalized students for their status further marginalized students (Martinek, 1991).

Activity, team and individual appeared to have some effect on marginality, however, the organizational methodology the teacher chose to use in each unit had more of an effect on the process, than did the actual activity (Brophy & Good, 1970). The decision to allow students to pick their own teams during the team sports, and maintain these same teams throughout the semester advanced the process by keeping groups distinct and separate.

However, a change in how teams were assigned alleviated the process somewhat when teachers chose to have the students participate in coeducational teams, causing the break-up of established groups. This proved effective in allowing students an opportunity to become acquainted with other individuals in the class and less marginalized.

The addition of bowling to the curriculum also had a profound effect on marginalization. The subject matter, as well as the change of environment, defused the process somewhat, as these students participated in what appeared to be a safer environment. Students found themselves in a much different environment than that of the gym. The bowling was smaller and darker, and students were separated into small groups. The design of the bowling alley did not allow for spectating, allowing students a small amount of privacy as they attempted a

new activity. However, the close quarters of the bus used for transportation to and from the bowling alley provided an opportunity for the further abuse of marginalized students. Thirty-five students rode the bus to and from the bowling alley. The two teachers and one practicum student supervised each trip. Once students were seated, it was impossible to see what was happening behind each high-backed seat. Teachers generally sat at the front of the bus, paying little attention to what was happening behind them. Libby felt the brunt of the abuse on the bus. She was pushed, had someone pushed onto her, and was scratched with an opened paper clip during these trips. Brenda received no physical abuse, but has demeaned every day on the bus, and refused a seat unless she got onto the bus first and found her own.

Physical competence had little effect on marginality with the exception of one specific group of students. "The Power" based their membership on physical ability and considered physical competence a primary criteria for membership. Students not perceived as being physically competent were marginalized by this group through intimidation and derision (Cartwright & Zander, 1968). Bud, in fact marginalized by this group, was physically competent and marginalized only because he was not popular with the other members of "the Power" and failed to meet the social expectations of "the Power". Perceived physical competence also had little effect on marginality. Most students in the class were aware of their own competence and did not overestimate or underestimate their own abilities. On the other hand, social competence had an important impact on marginalization. All of the students identified as marginalized had difficulty in dealing with others in the class, and their behaviors often lead to marginal status (Parkhurst & Asher, 1992).

Student characteristics did have an impact on the marginality. Prior marginal status did

not change from the very beginning, while such things as attitude and demeanor had an impact as the semester proceeded. Brenda entered the gym with her social marginalized status well established. She had previously had problems maintaining an acceptable level of personal hygiene and had been shunned because of this. Robin's temper and aggressive behavior during the semester created circumstances which lead to temporary marginal status with "the Power".

Teacher characteristics which impacted marginality included expectations held by the teachers for the marginalized students, and the teacher's attitude and rapport (Martinek, 1983). Each of the teachers were aware of the marginal students in the class and had differing opinions about how each came to be marginalized. These opinions, however, had little to do with how they treated the marginalized students.

The teachers held low expectations for these students, and these expectations influenced their interactions with the students. On two occasions, students identified as marginalized, approached the teachers in an effort to curtail the negative treatment of others towards them. On each of these occasions, the teachers refused to intervene. These interactions, the failure to lend assistance were then interpreted by the student as negative responses to themselves, and the students responded accordingly, not asking for assistance again.

Results from this study support research which has indicated that a lack of social competence, and the inability to successfully interacts with peers is related to marginalization and marginal status. Few studies, however, have addressed the effects of group formation in the physical education setting and how the structure and power of groups may be changed in order to alleviate marginal status. This study supports the need for careful planning in the

teaching order of team and individual activities in order to give students more of an opportunity to become acquainted with all members of the class before groups are formed.

Several aspects limited further access to factors which might have impacted marginalization. Inability to gain access into each of the locker rooms made it impossible to observe interactions which took place as the class was dressing in preparation for class, and interactions which took place once the students were dismissed to prepare to leave class. Another limitation to the study was the inability to obtain information about students interactions beyond the physical education setting. Family and other outside influences were not available for investigation. It was also difficult to explore the impact which self-concept and feelings of self-worth had on marginalization. Students were unwilling to talk about their feelings about themselves during interviews, and observations offered limited information on self-concept. Questions still remain on the impact of self-concept on marginalization.

The timing of the interviews held with students may also have limited certain aspects of the study. The first interview with students took place in the fifth week of the study. At that time students were willing to answer questions without hesitation. The second interview took place ten weeks into the study and results of these interviews were less than informative. Students, may have become more aware of the nature of the study for they seemed reticent in answering. It was not clear why they became reluctant in discussing what was happening in the class. Future consideration needs to be taken in scheduling and conducting interviews. Finally, it must be noted that this study was very brief. In order to thoroughly study the marginalization of students a longitudinal study is required.

Students enter into the classroom with a desire to be recognized and to be valued, by

teachers and peers alike (Martinek, 1991). Through marginalization, students move to the fringes or borders of the class, having little opportunity to be recognized or valued. This isolation makes successful interaction more difficult. These students often become lost in the system, having great difficulty in escaping the label of being socially incompetent (Parkhurst & Asher, 1992). An effort must be made to identify these students and the process by which they become marginalized. Consequently, teachers will be able to make the environment in physical education more inclusive for them.

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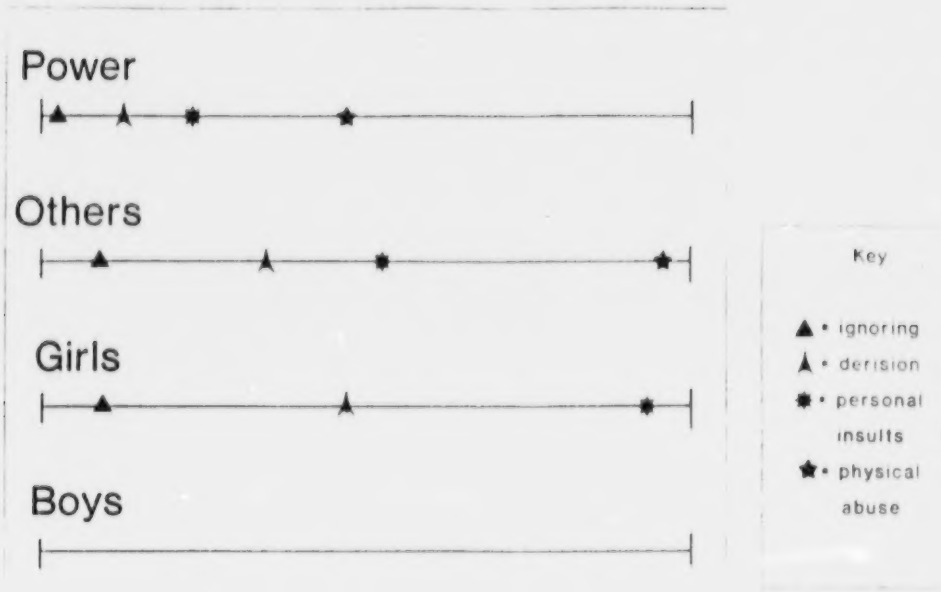

Figure 1. Development of exclusionary strategies by groups.

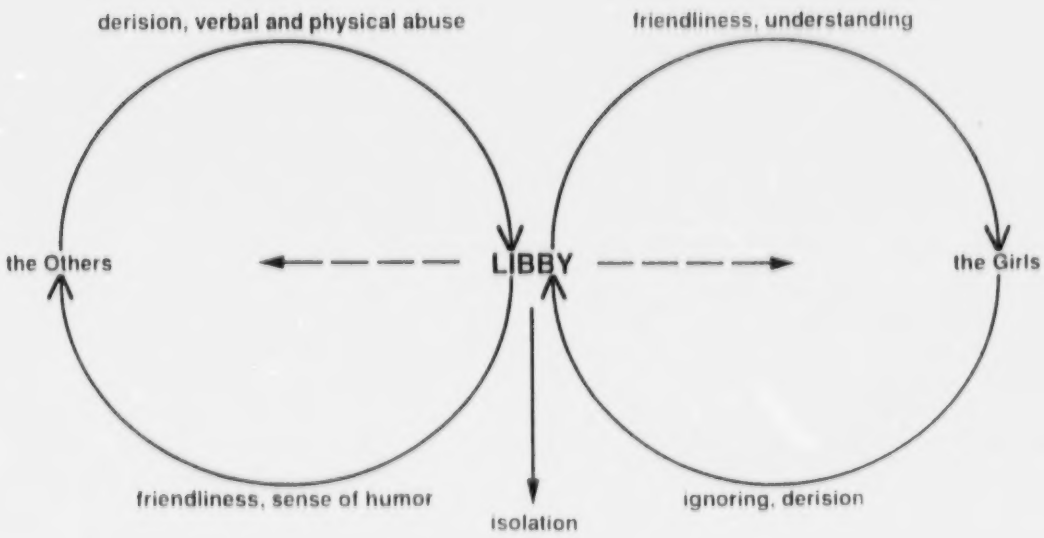

Figure 2. Libby's reaction to group behavior.

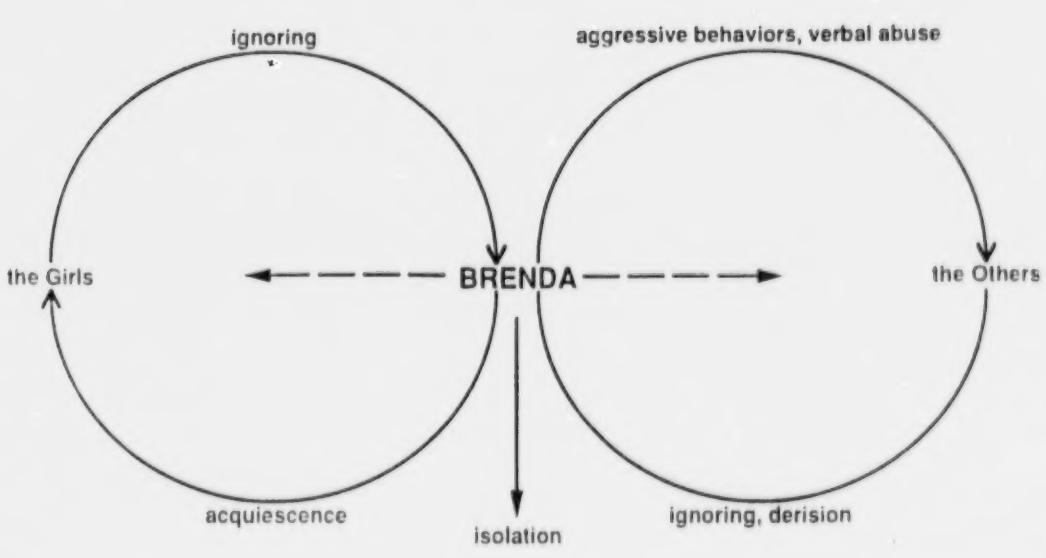

Figure 3. Brenda's reaction to group behavior.

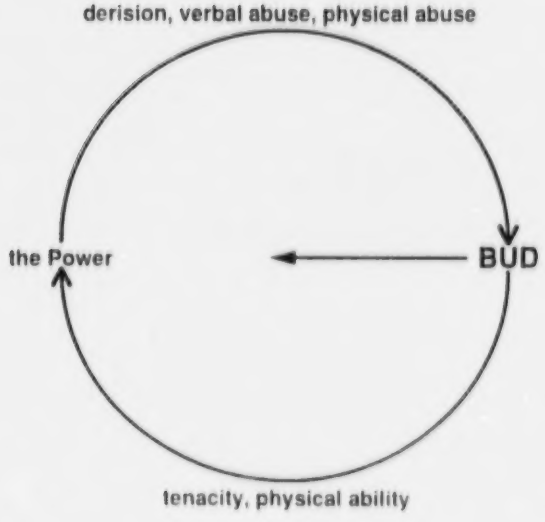

Figure 4. Bud's reaction to group behavior.

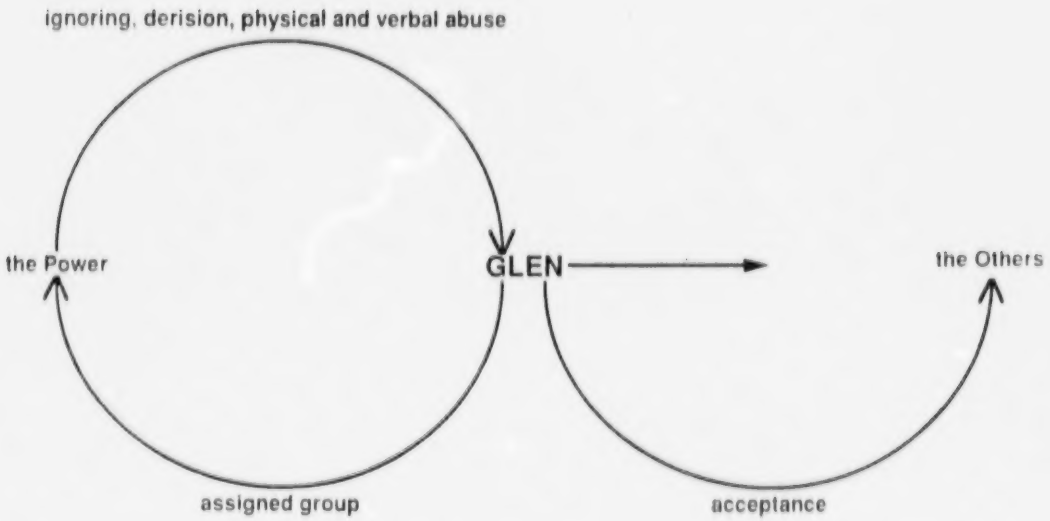

Figure 5. Glen's reaction to group behavior.

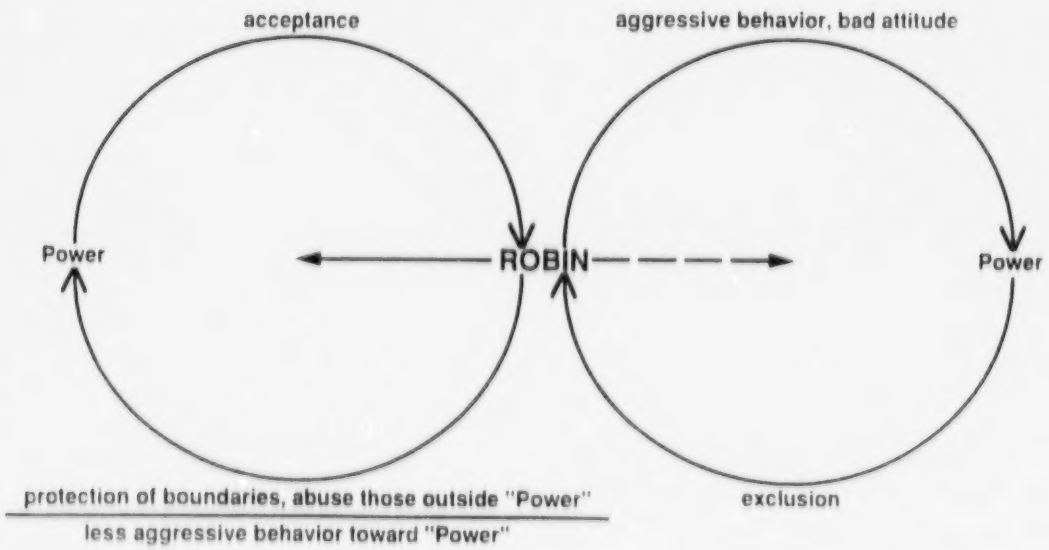

Figure 6. Robin's reaction to group behavior.